(a) by when it is planned to provide flight services to the frontier headquarters of Pithoragarh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) It is up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability.

Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government.

Incident of snapping of contact with ATC

118. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on 27th January, 2009 seven aircrafts lost all contacts with Air Traffic Controller (ATC) in Kolkata for almost 20 minutes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government is going to take a avert such occurrence in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, there was problem in on-board VHF equipments of one Jet Airways aircraft which resulted in jamming of frequency and blocking other aircraft operating on the same frequency. There were four other aircraft operating at the same time which were subsequently advised to change over to other frequency and operate on other frequency.

(c) To deal with such situations in accordance with ICAO Standards a procedure is already in place which was followed in the instant case also.

Air connectivity with Bhutan

†119. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bhutan has requested to competent authority to start a direct flight between Bhutan and Bagdogra airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The request from Bhutan Government has been received in January, 2009 conveying

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi